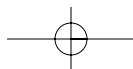
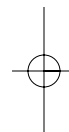
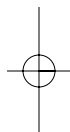
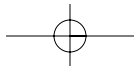
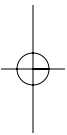
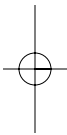


# I

## BENDING BORDERS AND EMERGING TRANSNATIONAL SPACES





## 1

**Transborder Dynamics in a Global Era***Situating the Asia-Pacific Transborder Subregions*

LIKE WARS, NATIONALIST ASPIRATIONS, and the natural rerouting of great rivers, globalization changes the world's borders by bending and stretching them out of shape and thus creating new transnational spaces. State borders, which on maps define political boundaries, no longer draw the line in people's lives they once did. Often, borders are still where states interdict goods, people, and information, legal or otherwise, but they are just as importantly where trade—including the exit and entrance of people, together with their skills and knowledge—is most intense. During times of war, even desolate borders, if not successfully closed, grow hyperactive with the swapping of goods, human beings, intelligence, and creeds. After the 2003 U.S.-led war against Iraq, Iraq's border with Iran, though officially closed for 20 years since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, was reopened to religious pilgrims from Iran. But there are also leaky gateways along the border for smugglers and militants. While former Iraqi army officers guide anti-American Afghan veterans into Iraq across the rugged desert, militants disguised as Iranian merchants or religious pilgrims carry illicit drugs, weapons, and explosives into Iraq to fuel the guerrilla campaign.<sup>1</sup> Everywhere, tumultuous forces, sometimes violent, sometimes economic, sometimes both, are blurring state borders, merging economies closer together and rendering them inexorably interdependent. Borders continue to contain self-described national populations and self-described national activity, but the resurgence of myriad ethnic groups and regional cultures is pushing and stretching their limits. New power centers with their own identities are springing out of once politically trivial landscapes. Smaller, peripheral cities and towns near newly active borders are growing into important and prosperous centers.

The pace and scale of changes at the border highlight a central irony of our time. Borders have become the loci of openness rather than its limit. The late twentieth century had more national borders than the previous century. Yet the world was also more open than at any other time in modern history. Compounding the irony is the fact that as the traditional significance of state borders erodes, border regions are reconfiguring the scope of economic, spatial, and sociocultural dynamics both within and across global, regional, and local levels. To add one more layer of contradiction: we all now live in a world where we grow ever more aware of border dynamics, even when those borders manifest themselves at remote, distant frontiers that we will never cross. This is clearly illustrated by the concern of U.S. citizens about border security and the U.S. government's redoubled efforts at border enforcement following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The concern strikes Americans as local and global at the same time; they must guard against an amorphous global threat to their own communities. America's newly guarded borders are also supremely relevant to any nation in the network of global trade. Ironically, American government policy following September 11 has been to promote international trade as the key to peace, but also to strictly enforce U.S. borders.

As economic flows across borders intensify, they generate serious social and spatial consequences. As Gerald Blake (1994, p. xii) argues, "boundaries create landscapes, and fundamentally affect communications, settlement patterns, and access to resources." Going a step further in this book, I contend that as borders get pushed and pulled by both domestic and global forces, border regions develop their own distinctive transborder (sub)regional character and structure that in turn reorganize broader national and local political and economic spaces into a new transnational space.

### Accelerated Global De-bordering and Re-bordering

Over the last 20 years, national borders in every corner of the globe have undergone an unprecedented opening and blurring that can be dubbed a simultaneous *de-bordering* and *re-bordering*. Rather than referring to simple, literal changes of international boundaries, de-bordering and re-bordering describe a broad, complex process in which borders are considered mutating spaces rather than fixed lines and where the sovereignty of people acting on their own plays a more powerful role than a nation acting or struggling to act as a unified whole. If the national slogan of yesterday was "Out of Many, One," a slogan that fits the shifting reality of today's states is "Out of Many, Many More." This reflects the simultaneous processes and outcomes of globalization and localization. In Rosenau's (1997) definition, globalization is a process that compels individuals and their collectives to act similarly and thus broaden

boundaries or de-emphasize them, while localization is a process that narrows the horizons of individual and collective actors and heightens the limiting role of boundaries. With more globalization, the flow of transnational capital and the types of transborder transactions have multiplied geometrically. As more national economies are drawn into the global economic system, the total length of borders open to trade and investment has increased. As most countries integrate more with the global economy, more sections of and points on their borders open to more intensive interactions with more powerful forces and actors beyond their control. While these are features and processes of general de-bordering, they may hit the countervailing forces of localization. This encounter or clash is not necessarily zero-sum. Rather, the meeting of two forces can result in re-bordering. If, for example, more porous and open borders bring nasty unintended consequences, such as new cross-border crime or drug trafficking or dangerous political ideas, and states are forced to rethink their borders as a result, both globalization and localization will have had an effect.

De-bordering and re-bordering also occur across spaces of every scale, from local to global. Although bordered nations have become more involved in the global system, some of the strongest transborder activity is local, with global ties that are limited or indirect at best. Since economic and sociospatial characteristics of border regions and localities tend to differ from the traditional or majority characteristics of the nations of which they are part, the effects of globalization on border regions deserves to be examined up close, in their own local and regional contexts. This book demonstrates that the intersection of global, regional, and local forces along and across borders is a major force behind the formation of transborder subregions. It looks primarily, but not exclusively, at lands of the Asia-Pacific, where this trend has been particularly strong over the last 20 years or so. The dynamics of world trade, politics, and security fall increasingly under the influence of the world's border regions. Any consideration of the world's future must count this trend along with those driven by more traditionally bordered regions and states.

### **The Reconfigured Nation-State and National Boundaries**

De-bordering and re-bordering have been going on since humans first drew lines in the sand. State formation is the most common way in which international boundaries have been drawn and redrawn over time. Against the long history of state formation, the pace at which nation-states have been created anew or reorganized from earlier states or other political forms (e.g., empires, colonized territories) has accelerated through the end of the twentieth century. From 660 BCE, when Japan came into political existence, to 1776, when the United States was declared a nation, states came into being on average once every 175

years. State formation before the nineteenth century was extremely slow despite the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which laid the foundation for the sovereign state. The nineteenth century saw the formation of states at an average of one every four years, for a total of 28. In the first half of the twentieth century, one state was formed every 18 months, with 82 states in 1950, while the formation of states quickened to one in every six months in the latter half of the twentieth century. Just after 1990, 23 new states raised their flags, and most of them have joined the United Nations. By 2003, there were 192 official, independent states; 191 of them (except the Vatican City) were formal members of the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> The most dramatic surge of state formation occurred in 1991, when the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the sudden birth of 14 new independent states, while the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia gave rise to several new independent states. This type of state re-formation not only has redefined and reconfigured many national boundaries but also has reshaped the relationship between the central and local governments of both old and new states.

Generally speaking, as the number of states increases, the total number of national borders also increases. In mid-1993, there were roughly 311 land boundaries in the world, and about 160 of them reached a coast, where they were the beginning point for offshore boundaries. However, the precise number of both land and sea boundaries is difficult to establish (Blake, 1994).<sup>3</sup> As more borders are added to the world map, old disputes and new tensions over international boundaries arise. A number of international boundaries in long-standing dispute make the status of land and offshore border territories uncertain and subject to periodic military conflicts. The Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, the site of potential oil and natural gas, have been claimed by China, Taiwan, Viet Nam, Malaysia, and the Philippines since Japan gave up its claim in 1951. The continuing dispute has triggered political and military tension between China and the Philippines in recent years. The long-standing dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir since 1947, which triggered three border wars through 1999 and claimed 65,000 lives, mostly civilians, flared up again in 2002 during the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. It remains the most divisive issue for the contentious India-Pakistan relationship, despite the recent efforts and progress by both countries and the Kashmiri separatists to resolve the territorial conflict.

Successful resolution of border disputes generally leads to renewed and improved cross-border economic and social ties. Illustrative cases include the growing border trade between China and Viet Nam and China and the Russian Far East in the 1980s and 1990s. Russia and Kazakhstan, by agreeing to delimit some 7,500 km of their borderline in 2004 to end the border dispute from the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, began new cooperation in fighting against terrorism, weapons smuggling, drug trafficking, and illegal migration.

A re-bordering was set in motion by the formation of new states, and the subsequent interface of more borders may be followed by more intensive

cross-border interactions on a distinctive transnational regional scale. This type of transborder regional development could be facilitated by revitalized historical, ethnic, and cultural connections across borders. The Caucasus and Caspian Sea region in Central Asia is a case in point. The breakup of the Soviet Union into independent states and autonomous republics, coupled with its being an important part of the old Silk Road between Europe and Asia, brought about growing economic activity and initiatives related to the transportation of abundant oil and other commodities across the new borders. Instead of through Russia, Uzbekistan has been routing more trainloads of cotton along the Caucasus corridor across the Caspian Sea to the Azerbaijani port of Baku and on to the Georgian port of Poti. A new pipeline began to pump oil from Baku to Supsa, near Poti, in 1999. The United States has committed funds to explore the feasibility of building a US\$2.5 billion,<sup>4</sup> 1,650-km oil line from the Azerbaijani capital of Baku, through Georgia, to Turkey's deep-water port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>5</sup> These costly transnational infrastructure projects, however, have been slow to start due to continued political instability and ethnic conflict, which exemplifies the kind of complexities involved in the transborder subregions examined in several later chapters.

### **Formal Regional Integration and Border Transformations**

Another driving force behind the accelerated global de-bordering and re-bordering is the formation of formally integrated regional unions or trade blocs such as the European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

#### **Illustrations from the European Union**

While the European Union provides an institutionalized supranational cooperative framework and a governance structure, the removal of trade barriers and freer transnational mobility of production factors have had an uneven local impact on the status, identity, and role of border cities and towns and their interactions. The French town of Saverne provides an example. Located in the Alsace region of northeastern France bordering Germany and Switzerland, Saverne and the surrounding area changed to German control four times between 1648 and 1944, when it was last reclaimed by France. This history, coupled with a border location, has imbued its people with neither a French identity nor a German one. In recent years, Saverne has taken on a pro-European appearance and identity, with EU flags flying everywhere, local residents gathering in the Euro Bar next to the Hotel Europe, and the mayor nicknamed "Mr. Europe."<sup>6</sup> (See chapter 8 for a discussion of the trinational Alsace-Baden-Basel border subregion).

Regional integration has also reinforced or reshaped the structure and scope of border regions or subregions under the overarching supranational system. To promote cross-border cooperation, a number of Dutch and German municipalities created the EUREGIO, one of the oldest border regions in Europe, in the 1950s. In the early 1990s, the EUREGIO comprised 106 municipalities in an area with 1.9 million residents. Under the EU, initiatives for cooperation along the border of Germany and the Netherlands have been increasing. The EU's policy for stimulating development in economically disadvantaged regions has revitalized many of the 40 unevenly developed "Euregions" defined at the end of the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> One such border region that began to seek new economic opportunities is the Euregion Maas-Rhine, located along the Dutch-Belgian-German borders. It is geographically larger than the older EUREGIO and has pursued cross-border cooperation since 1976 (see chapter 8 for a discussion of both cases).

### Examples from NAFTA

The North American Free Trade Agreement offers an exemplary context in which the local impact of formal transnational regional integration on border cities and regions has become more visible and intensified. Economic integration over the U.S.-Mexico border has accelerated since the onset of NAFTA in 1994, evidenced by the border-intensive nature of Mexico's rapidly growing importation of U.S. recoverable waste. In El Paso, Texas, hundreds of flatbed trucks, container-haulers, and tankers line up at the border to cross into Mexico each day, carrying waste paper, beverage-container glass, scrap metals, and plastics to be recycled. In San Diego, California, 2,000 tons of glass containers are collected by a U.S. company each month and sent to its plant in the Mexican border city of Mexicali. In Mexicali, 19 tons of plastic waste are gathered each week from foreign-owned maquiladora plants by a local company and shipped to Guadalajara. In 1997, Mexico imported between US\$500 million to US\$1 billion worth of U.S. recoverable waste, surpassing South Korea to become the second most popular destination for U.S. waste, after Canada. The booming of border manufacturing in Mexico after NAFTA has brought some prosperity to its border cities, which in turn has enlivened the traditional border business of recycling tires. With about 5 million old truck, car, and motorcycle tires littered in the city, four tires for each resident, Mexicali has become a dominant used-tire city in North America. It has created many jobs in the local tire retreading shops and provided a large and nearby market for U.S.-based tire exporters. However, the buildup of used tires in Mexicali poses a threat to California's Imperial Valley—a lush agricultural region just across the border—as tire dumps are likely to turn into tire fires,<sup>8</sup> while other forms of wastes also pose hazards (see Frey, 2003).



Another old problem has haunted the U.S.-Mexico border. For decades, untreated waste from the leaky sewage system in Tijuana has flowed down through the Tijuana River into the U.S. border communities, negatively affecting local residents. This seemingly mundane local problem has become complicated and magnified in the border context as international diplomacy and multitudes of municipal, state, and federal government agencies of both nations have been involved. Some progress has been made. A joint treatment plant was constructed on U.S. soil that captures and partly cleans about 25 million gallons of the overflow waste each day, and US\$140 million was spent on projects in Mexico to expand Tijuana's sewer system and plug leaks that send waste to the U.S. side during heavy winter rains. In 1998, a treatment plant north of the border, built and run by the United States with help from Mexico, began operation, which sent treated waste through a huge pipe directly into the ocean. The persistent problem illustrates the complexity of border pollution or any other border-related issue that typically involves binational agreements, cooperation among multiple government agencies at various levels, border community residents, and such non-government organizations (NGOs) as environmentalist groups.<sup>9</sup> Apparently, the formal transnational regional arrangement of NAFTA, which was concerned primarily with such macroeconomic issues as trade and investment, neglected cross-border environmental issues and thus has little binding effect on pollution along the U.S.-Mexico border.

NAFTA has induced change in transborder flows and regulation of the historically very open U.S.-Canada border. First of all, NAFTA allowed Canadians to obtain temporary work visas at the border quickly. This has accelerated the effort of U.S. companies with severe shortages of high-tech workers to recruit Canadian talent with top salaries and other perquisites. A large number of U.S. companies recruit graduates at the University of Waterloo in Kitchener, Ontario, near the border with the United States. The university has a top-ranked computer science department and serves as a major training ground for Canadian computer scientists and engineers. This southbound "brain drain" continues, even though new U.S. immigration regulations in effect since April 1997 have begun to restrict easy entry of Canadian business travelers into the United States. At the border, businesspeople that do not need visas because of NAFTA often get mixed with people who are required to have a visa to work in the United States. One Toronto-based computer consulting firm reported a loss of contracts because its U.S. clients have stopped using Canadian consultants due to the difficulties in getting them across the border.<sup>10</sup> The evidence suggests that even though the 6,440-km U.S.-Canada border, the world's longest land boundary and one of the busiest, has become more open and porous under NAFTA, the latter has complicated the economic, environmental, and travel conditions on both sides of the line. Since

September 11, 2001, the threat of terrorists slipping through this border, most of which is rural and lightly protected, has further complicated control.

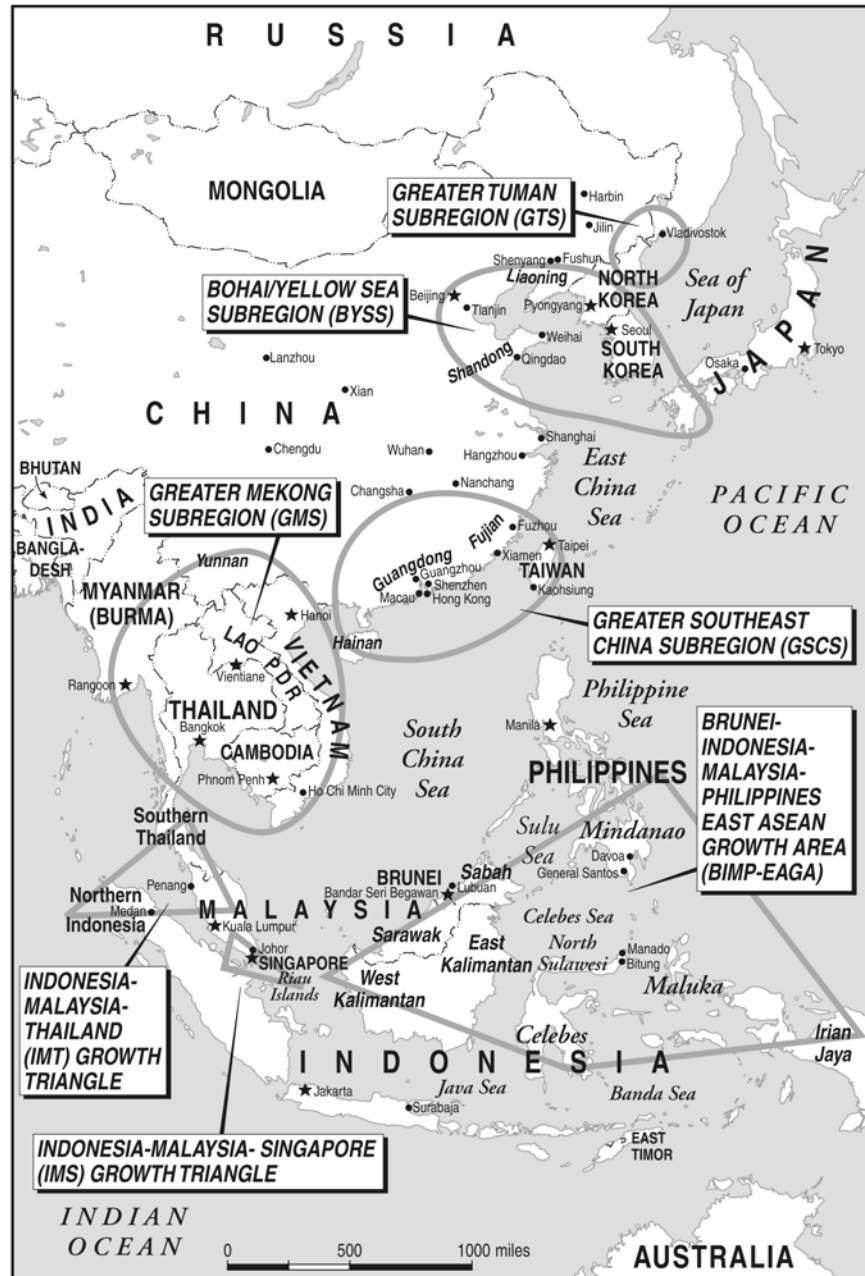
### Transborder Transactions and Informal Subregional Clustering

While supranational regional integration has created a certain amount of global de-bordering and re-bordering, the latter has been triggered by more extensive transborder links and intensive transactions of a subregional scale, without a formal integration of entire national economies through inter-state treaties or agreements. This phenomenon is represented by the Asia-Pacific transborder subregions that differ from the EU or NAFTA trade blocks in three crucial ways. First, they generally involve multiple subnational territorial units with a more intensive border focus, rather than several entire nation-states. Second, they usually have a smaller spatial scope than the continental size and spread of the EU or NAFTA. Third, they are much less institutionalized and often have an informal governance structure (see chapter 3 for a differentiation between formal and informal subregional integration).

The Asia-Pacific transborder subregions are variably labeled as “Growth Triangles” (see Chia and Lee, 1993; Parsonage, 1992), “Region States” (Ohmae, 1995), or “Natural Economic Territories” (Scalapino, 1995). Since I will describe the transborder subregions in detail in chapter 2, the task here is to merely locate the rough spatial contour of all the Asia-Pacific transborder subregions, which will be subject to in-depth case and comparative studies in later chapters.

### Locating the Asia-Pacific Transborder Subregions

From Northeast Asia on the western Pacific Rim, several transborder subregions stretch south and west to include both mainland and maritime Southeast Asia (see map 1.1). In Northeast Asia, a transborder subregion, designated the Greater Tumen Subregion (GTS) in this study, comprises three areas: the southeastern border region of China’s Jilin province, centered on the cities of Hunchun and Tumen; the northern border area of North Korea, featuring the port cities of Rajin and Sonbong; and the Khasan region of the Russian Far East (RFE), anchored on the port city of Posyet and the southern Maritime Territory around Vladivostok. This GTS transborder subregion is physically defined by the Tumen River that connects the border areas of the three riparian states—China, North Korea, and Russia (see chapter 6). Spatially contiguous and economically connected with the GTS is a long border zone that closely links China’s Heilongjiang province and the RFE. The broad hinterland of the GTS may include transnational links among China’s northeast, the RFE, eastern Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan’s coastal region facing the Sea of Japan.



MAP 1.1  
Seven Asia-Pacific Transborder Subregions

Farther south and west of the GTS is a transborder subregion that is designated the Bohai/Yellow Sea Subregion (BYSS) in this study. It consists of the coastal zones of China's Liaoning and Shandong provinces plus Beijing and Tianjin, South Korea's west coast, and Japan's Kyushu region. The components of the BYSS, unlike those of the GTS, are internally connected and delimited only by sea borders. The boundaries of the GTS and BYSS, most widely delineated, would make the two transborder subregions almost contiguous and overlapping with some links, thus enveloping much of Northeast Asia. However, the GTS and BYSS are analyzed separately here (in chapters 5 and 6) to focus on subregional and local diversities.

A transborder subregion in East Asia, designated the Greater Southeast China Subregion (GSCS) in this study, covers China's Guangdong and Fujian provinces, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao. (The GSCS is examined in chapter 4.)

To the west of the GSCS, in Southeast Asia, is a transborder subregion designated the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) in this study. The GMS extends over China's Yunnan province, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Thailand, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. Unlike the previous subregions, the GMS comprises mainly nation-states; the exception is China's Yunnan province. This subnational unit, coupled with border-specific and intensive interactions among the countries, qualifies the GMS as a transborder subregion rather than a formal regional scheme like the EU. Given its large area and the participation of six countries, the GMS features the longest length and the largest number of national borders, some of which are landlocked. (The GMS is discussed in chapter 7.)

Away from mainland Asia and spread across the entire maritime Southeast Asia are three distinctive transborder subregions or growth triangles, as they are commonly known in the region. The first is the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore growth triangle (IMS-GT), which consists of Singapore, the state of Johor in peninsular Malaysia, and the Riau province of Indonesia. The Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand growth triangle (IMT-GT) encompasses the 14 provinces of southern Thailand, the four states of northwestern Malaysia, and the two Sumatran provinces of western Indonesia. The Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA, hereafter abbreviated as EAGA) includes Brunei Darussalam, southern Mindanao and the island province of Palawan of the Philippines; North Sulawesi of Indonesia and the two adjacent Indonesian provinces on the island of Borneo (East and West Kalimantan); and the Malaysian territories of Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan. Unlike the transborder subregions along the edge of mainland Asia, the three maritime Southeast Asian growth triangles are organized, bounded, and crisscrossed largely by sea borders. (These maritime transborder subregions are discussed in chapter 7.)

In terms of geography and demography, the transborder subregions have a collective significance for the entire Asia-Pacific region that cannot be overemphasized. They cover a large block of mainland and maritime Asia and contain a sizeable share of the region's total population. The GSCS, for example, spans 340,000 sq km and has a combined population of 126 million. The more expansive GMS covers 2.3 million sq km and includes a total population of 229 million (see chapter 7). If we measure these subregions by the distance from their dominant centers to their hinterlands, these areas would be even larger. In the BYSS, there are more than 300 million people living within two hours of air travel from Seoul (W. Kim, 1990). In economic terms, the seven transborder subregions encompass mostly subnational parts or all of 16 Asian and other economies that cover the whole spectrum of development levels and stages, from Japan and South Korea at one end and Lao PDR and Cambodia at the other, with Thailand and China somewhere in between. The seven subregions cut across approximately 25 land and offshore boundaries.<sup>11</sup>

Besides including such dominant hubs and gateways as Hong Kong and Singapore that anchor their respective subregions, the transborder subregions have enabled a large number of small border cities and towns to grow from previously peripheral and isolated positions to the development forefront and to connect directly or indirectly with the global economy. One of them, Dongguan, in southeastern China has even risen to the status of world's largest and most concentrated manufacturing location for computer peripherals (see chapter 4).

### **The Central Argument: From Barriers to Bridges and Back**

The comparative analysis of such a diverse set of cases is guided by one central argument: borders are shedding their traditional barrier effects and are playing a more bridging role in the Asia-Pacific area and elsewhere, although this role does lapse back under changed circumstances. The shift from barrier to bridge, and maybe back to barrier, is a more intuitive shorthand for expressing the complex twin concept of de-bordering and re-bordering. Although the barrier-to-bridge shift is not smooth and linear, it is indeed taking place across the previously closed and heavily guarded borders. These borders used to function as political barriers that blocked economic and cultural exchanges to differing degrees. They also existed as military frontiers that received heavy defense spending but little economic assistance. As a result, the zones around these borders became marginalized. Due to changes in a variety of conditions, these borders have begun to bridge separate and isolated local and regional economies. The emerging transnational spaces have provided

new opportunities for global-local links, perhaps generating self-sustaining local development that would not be possible without the presence of a trans-border subregion.

The bridging role of borders in the transborder subregions is a complex one. Bridging creates a cooperative space between binational or trinational economies. Broadly viewed, bridging generates economic growth and transactions that can spread beyond the immediate border zones to other parts of the transborder subregions. On the other hand, bridging may turn borders and border zones into new contested terrains for illegal migration, drug smuggling, spillover pollution, and other undesirable outcomes. States may respond to these threats by reimposing border control, thus moving back toward the barrier role of borders. This reassertion of state authority was characterized by Andreas (2000a, 2000b) as re-bordering, which he examined at length in the contexts of states controlling and policing illegal drug smuggling and immigration across the U.S.-Mexico border and the EU's emerging eastern boundary. While I share this notion of re-bordering to some extent, my argument about the borders shifting from barriers to bridges and back underscores a broader conceptualization of de-bordering in relation to re-bordering. In contending that the bridging role of borders has become stronger than at anytime before, and that the bridging role is now stronger than the barrier role, I focus on extensive de-bordering in terms of strong links and heavy flows across a large number of international boundaries in several subregional settings. The links and flows in turn usher in a re-bordering process by connecting border cities and their hinterlands into a transnational spatial network that spans multiple boundaries and beyond. This kind of re-bordering is different from and unlikely to be completely reversed by state-initiated re-bordering through enhanced border controls.

#### **Re-bordering After September 11 and SARS: A Temporary Reversal in a Long-term Trend**

The argument about borders changing from barriers to bridges and back has become more salient in light of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent government response to border security. The terrorists appear to have taken advantage of the very open borders of the United States for visitors and other flows, especially from and through Canada and Mexico. Before September 11, foreign visitors were not carefully checked if they crossed over a land border and could convince an immigration inspector that they were a citizen of Canada or Mexico. In the wake of the terrorist attacks, the United States created the Department of Homeland Security and clamped down on border control, which immediately affected cross-



border economic transactions and social life. Tightened inspections at the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders slowed down the normal trucking traffic. Drivers had to wait two or three hours to cross from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to El Paso, Texas, which usually takes no more than 45 minutes during peak traffic times. There arose the concern that the slowed flow of commerce would set back efforts to integrate the economies of the United States, Canada, and Mexico under NAFTA (see chapter 8). As Mexicans stopped coming over for shopping due to the long wait through the border crossings, the retail businesses in the Texas border cities and towns of McAllen, Laredo, and Brownsville, which cater heavily to Mexican customers, suffered badly. The heightened security interrupted the traditional ways of life for the Tohono O'odham Indians, a 24,000-member nation whose lands span large parts of northern Mexico and southern Arizona. Many members have stopped crossing the border to visit relatives or to attend traditional religious festivals for fear of being regularly stopped by the Border Patrol.<sup>12</sup> The new fingerprinting procedure at major U.S. air and sea ports, implemented in January 2004, has lengthened the time of entry for 24 million foreign visitors traveling with visas.<sup>13</sup>

The outbreak of SARS in China's Guangdong province and its spread to Hong Kong and beyond in 2003 cast the border between them into international spotlight, this time not for their economic dynamism. It also posed a major challenge to the regional governments on both sides of the porous and "infected" boundary. It was reported that a medical professor from Zhongshan University in Guangzhou infected a group of people during his stay in a Hong Kong hotel, while one of the people in the group spread the disease at the Prince of Wales Hospital (where the mainland professor later died) and then the Amoy Gardens residential complex. One family living there packed up their belongings immediately and returned to their native town in Guangdong. But after they fell sick in Guangdong, they recrossed the border to seek better treatment in Hong Kong. According to official estimates, 10 percent of the people with SARS in Hong Kong had visited the mainland before they got infected. Besides driving down the number of cross-border visits by 40 percent, the crisis raised new issues concerning cross-border integration, such as choice of residence and environmental and public hygiene, which go beyond the more dominant economic and transportation issues regarding the facilitation of growing cross-border investment flows and vehicle traffic. While the immediate, knee-jerk reaction from some in Hong Kong was to propose restrictions on the flow of people across the border, including banning non-essential visits, the SARS crisis has sharpened the sense of common destiny for Guangdong and Hong Kong and both economic and social integration between them. Although the Hong Kong government took some emergency measures, such as checking the temperature of border crossers (see the photo

in the preface), it began to seek more extensive cooperation with the Guangdong government to set up a formal mechanism to combat the disease and control its spread<sup>14</sup> and budding recurrence in early 2004. However, it remains to be seen whether this cross-border government cooperation in response to a crisis will sustain itself for the long-term need of guiding deeper and wider integration, given the largely market-driven nature of the cross-border economic links, the *lassie-faire* tradition of the Hong Kong government, and the difficulty for Hong Kong to fully cooperate with the Guangdong government, which still operates with the constraints of a control-oriented central government in Beijing, as illustrated by the latter's insistence on lab testing for confirming the SARS virus in Beijing in early 2004.

The above developments suggest that the barrier aspect of borders can be resurrected and strengthened by government policy in response to disastrous events, which are illustrated further by the frantic policies of countries to ban imported beef and kill millions of chicken during an isolated incidence of mad cow disease in the United States at the end of 2003 and a limited spread of bird flu in several Asian countries in early 2004. They point to the coexisting and inseparable function of borders as both barriers and bridges. This function of borders may shift back and forth between barrier and bridge depending on different contexts and changing conditions within these contexts. In the Asia-Pacific transborder subregional context, the bridging role of borders has been gaining strength in spite of the existing and emerging barriers created by state policies and the lack of transport infrastructure. The evidence is compelling that broad de-bordering and re-bordering has permeated the Asia-Pacific region in the form of several transborder subregions as contact and cooperative zones. Although this study is sensitive to ways in which borders continue to impede cooperation and even create conflict, it aims at proving that the Asia-Pacific transborder subregions represent a broad and sustainable long-term trend toward cross-border cooperation and integration. This book suggests that despite the kind of re-bordering in terms of escalated security measures at the U.S. borders after September 11, 2001, and infection control and quarantine procedures at the Guangdong–Hong Kong border and other borders across Asian countries after SARS in 2003, they amount to a mere temporary reversal in the inevitable, long-term trend in global de-bordering and re-bordering, as demonstrated by the extensive evidence in this book.

### A Conceptual Preview: Multiple Lenses for Integrated Insights

The central argument advanced above raises the crucial analytical question of how to account for the diversity among several transborder subregions in the Asia-Pacific context and elsewhere. As the earlier geographic profile indi-



cates, these transborder subregions comprise three or more subnational border regions or areas across multiple contiguous or adjacent international boundaries. This composition creates several layers and inevitably uneven ties among the differently scaled territorial units. While complex, the composition of the transborder subregions makes them rich cases to interface with theoretical perspectives along multiple dimensions.

Before I provide a foretaste of this interface from the theoretical side, it is important to ask when these transborder subregions emerged and how they really differ from other seemingly similar regional formations. Chapter 2 addresses these questions by offering a long historical view of the economic, cultural, and spatial links among some of the areas involved in the transborder subregions today, as a way of assessing whether the latter had any geographic antecedents. Moving from distant to recent history, chapter 2 also examines why the Cold War era prevented the transborder subregions from emerging until it ended around 1990. The relevance of a geohistorical versus a political economy claim is assessed in anticipation of developing the more comprehensive framework in chapter 3. Having dated the recent timing of the transborder subregions, chapter 2 develops a nuanced conceptualization of the Asia-Pacific transborder subregion by decomposing its constituent units and then refitting them into a nested hierarchy. While this exercise differentiates the transborder subregion from formal supranational schemes such as the EU, it signals the existence of more informal cross-border subregional formations underneath. Ending with an identification of the important characteristics and dimensions of the transborder subregion, chapter 2 paves the way for setting up the analytical framework in chapter 3.

The key to an integrated analytical framework for these cases is to bring together relevant theoretical perspectives and apply them in a coherent and complementary fashion. From the standpoint of the cases, it is highly important to know how to array them and use their attributes as evidence to illuminate significant theoretical debates. Having evaluated what theoretical literatures may be most relevant to the cases, I have settled on organizing the important elements of the literatures into four analytical lenses, examining the economic, political, sociocultural, and spatial dimensions of the cases sequentially and also interactively. Reciprocally, I interpret the comparative evidence on the cases in light of the analytical lenses to produce insights on the debated theoretical issues.

To begin with, I draw selectively from the vast globalization literature to build an economic lens (the global-local nexus) focusing on how the transborder subregions mediate or restructure cross-border links between the world economy and local places. Some of the literature on economic globalization speaks to the strong impact of trade and investment on the interdependence

and integration among national economies without paying specific attention to how this impact varies across regional and local areas (see chapter 3). Globalization scholars who deal with specific localities tend to be concerned with how major international metropolises have become global or world cities (see Friedmann, 1986; Sassen, 2001; but see Robinson, 2002, for a recent exception). This omission and bias in the research has left us with both an inflated and limited view of how global economic forces impact or interact with national or local economies. The global-local economic lens reveals that the impact and penetration of the global economy can be mediated or redirected by the varied mixes of comparative advantages and complementarities of the constituent units to yield uneven growth and integration within a transborder subregion. Looking at specific border cities through the global-local economic lens also reveals the extent to which some of them may remain disconnected and thus will not benefit much from the global economy, due to natural endowments and traditional local-local economic ties specific to a transborder subregion. While the GSCS demonstrates the positive mediating effect on global-local economic links (see chapter 4), the GTS may exemplify the constraining influence (see chapter 6). The insight gained from these two and other cases is that to understand the local impact of the global economy and local responses, we must study the mediating role of such in-between structures as the transborder subregions.

One of the other factors bearing crucially on the transborder subregions is the relative role of the state at the central or local level. To capture this role, I have constructed a second analytical lens that looks for different forms of de-centering tendencies and practices of the state that are abundant in the transborder subregional context. Basically, the de-centering state in the transborder subregions manifests itself both institutionally and spatially. In an institutional sense, de-centering takes the primary form of the central state decentralizing flexible policy-making power to border regions and cities in order to rebalance uneven development or target certain areas to take advantage of existing or potential global links. This leads to the rise of local autonomy in varying degrees that facilitates or impedes cross-border cooperation. Institutional de-centering also is reflected in the central states yielding or transferring some policy-making power to the supranational level for the sake of promoting cross-border cooperation. Spatial de-centering of the state, in a related way, takes the form of uneven scattering and diffusion of the authority and influence of the national government from the political center to previously neglected and marginalized border areas (see chapter 3). In the GSCS, the institutional and spatial de-centering has blended into considerable decentralization and effective local autonomy in China's Guangdong and Fujian provinces, thus successfully fostering favorable global-local economic links and the rapid growth and integration

of the entire subregion (see chapter 4). On the other hand, the lack of genuine decentralization and local autonomy in the RFE and North Korea, especially the latter, has hampered the growth and integration of the GTS in conjunction with other complicating factors (see chapter 6).

One other cluster of factors that interacts with the economic and political forces in shaping the transborder subregions can be adequately subsumed under the analytical lens of cross-border social capital. To construct this analytical lens, I have pulled together several elements such as historical legacies, ethnic identity, kinship ties, and linguistic similarity and reconfigured them into action-oriented social networks that have uneven presence in the transborder subregions. Through this analytical lens, I intend to show that these cross-border social networks matter a great deal in enabling economic links across the border areas, with the qualifying argument that more extensive and stronger social networks have a more powerful influence. A reasoned employment of this analytical lens is dependent on recognizing that many elements of cross-border social capital lay dormant under closed-border economies and political tension and have only resurfaced recently in the more open and interactive environment of a transborder subregion (see chapter 3). The sharp contrast in the effectiveness of this cross-border social capital is reflected in the GSCS (chapter 4) and the GTS (chapter 6). Viewed from this analytical lens, the cases demonstrate that the concept of social capital, which is typically applied at the individual or group level and has been proven useful for thinking about regional development, sheds considerable light on the aggregate performance of the transborder subregions (see X. Chen, 2000c).

Finally, there needs to be an analytical lens that scans the effects of geographic proximity and cross-border transportation infrastructure on the transborder subregions. A key rationale for this lens is that distance, which has lost some frictions in a globalizing world, is almost by definition central to the formation of a transborder subregion. In another and perhaps more ironic sense, short distance in terms of geographic contiguity or adjacency is important because it does not necessarily reduce the natural and artificial barrier effects of international boundaries that could impede the growth and integration of a transborder subregion. Besides some location constraints, such as difficult topography and lack of access to sea, the generally less developed cross-border transport links, coupled with the lack of large-scale resources and cross-national cooperation for improving them, negate the advantages of short physical distance between the constituent units of a transborder subregion. Applying the spatial lens to the cases reveals how geographic proximity and cross-border transport links, jointly or independently, facilitate or inhibit the economic, political, and sociocultural factors in determining the formation of the transborder subregions. In the BYSS, the presence of an extensive

and still expanding network of air and shipping links has been effective in bridging ocean boundaries (see chapter 5). While it is difficult to link wider distances across a large number of land borders in the expansive GMS due to the shortage of financial resources in the least developed Asian countries involved, the prioritized assistance and financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has alleviated the problem (see chapter 7).

Each of the four analytical lenses draws from a particular body of the literature and is intended to illuminate a distinctive dimension of the transborder subregion. Only in coming together in an integrated framework with cross-references do they work in unison to provide a comprehensive explanation for the similarities and differences among the primary and secondary cases in chapters 4 through 7. The key is to apply these analytical lenses consistently across the cases and be specific about how they complement one another within each case. If this is successfully executed, the cases will shed light on the key theoretical issues that lie behind the analytical lenses. To help stretch the analytical scope of these lenses, I extend the comparative reach to several cases in the U.S.-Mexican and European contexts (see chapter 8). These cases demonstrate how far out the four analytical lenses can see, and they suggest factors that lie beyond the purview of the lenses but nevertheless bear on cross-border subregional dynamics. In the final chapter, I look through the analytical lenses again to highlight the theoretical insights from the set of primary and secondary cases and then turn to the practical challenges posed by these transborder subregions to governance and possible responses to the challenges.

### Pushing Beyond What We Have Known

By subjecting a range of cases to a broad comparative analysis within an integrated framework, this book moves beyond the existing literature on the subject, which suffers from three main deficiencies. First of all, there is a lack of a systematic and comprehensive framework that can make overall sense of a fairly large number of discrete case studies and lead to generalizable conclusions. Although several edited volumes have attempted to bring multiple cases together, they either did not devote a balanced attention to all the important dimensions and factors involved or placed major emphasis on policy issues (see Chen and Kwan, 1997; Perkmann and Sum, 2002; Thant, Tang, and Kakazu, 1998). The framework developed here offers a badly need analytical synthesis.

Second, the literature has not provided a balanced and explicitly comparative coverage of all the Asia-Pacific transborder subregions; the overwhelming emphasis has been on the South China–Hong Kong–Taiwan triangle (or the so-called Greater China), with a secondary focus on the Singapore–Johor–Riau triangle. Besides the numerous articles, a number of edited volumes (see

Kwok and So, 1995; Shambaugh, 1995; Naughton, 1997; Drover, Johnson, and Lai Po-wah, 2001; Yeh et al., 2002) have focused on Greater China, especially bilateral links between Guangdong and Hong Kong and between Southeastern China and Taiwan. Studies of the Singapore-Johor-Riau growth triangle have expanded from an early edited book of largely descriptive accounts (Lee, 1991) to a series of more detailed article-length analyses (see Chia and Lee, 1993; Peachey, Perry, and Grundy-Warr, 1998; Grundy-Warr, Peachey, and Perry, 1999). Comparative efforts to bring these two cases together are rare (see Ho and So, 1997). For the first time, this book pulls together seven cases of transborder subregional integration by treating three of them as primary cases and four as secondary cases in an integrated framework.

The third inadequacy in the literature is a shortage of efforts to integrate analyses at different spatial scales (as illustrated in figure 2.1 in chapter 2), with even less attention paid to the nested relations across these levels, especially the highly localized ties between border cities and their direct or indirect links to the global economy. This is truer of the works focusing on the less studied cases such as the Tumen River region and the Greater Mekong Subregion (see Rozman, 1997, 1998a; Valencia, 1995; Asian Development Bank [ADB], 1996a, 1996b, 2002a, 2002b). This book strives to maintain a close scrutiny of the trans-local and global-local ties mediated by higher-order, in-between relations within the transborder subregions, particularly in the three primary cases (chapters 4–6). While chapter 3 introduces the integrated framework with the four analytical lenses, the historical backdrop and conceptual foundation for that framework lie in chapter 2, to which we now turn.

## Notes

1. "Porous border a portal for potential terrorists," *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 2003, p. 6.
2. The total number of states in 1950 (82) was reported by *World Atlas* (DK Publishing, 1997); the total number of states in 2003 (191) was reported in the United Nations' website, [www.un.org/overview](http://www.un.org/overview). Many of the new states formed in the 1990s are successors to the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Future potential new states may emerge from Israel (a Palestinian state), Canada (Quebec), and the two Koreas (through unification).
3. The precise number of land boundaries depends on whether micro-territories are included, and whether boundaries with more than one sector are counted once or twice. Eventually, agreed maritime boundaries will outnumber land boundaries, despite the continued proliferation of new states (see note 2 above). However, maritime delimitation is impossible if there is uncertainty or dispute over the land boundary at the coast (Blake, 1994, p. xiii).
4. Throughout the book, monetary amounts are given in U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted.
5. The information and discussion on Central Asia here has been derived from three articles in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Silk road enjoys new life amid calm in Caucasus," March 3, 1998, p. 14; "Scramble for oil in Central Asia hits roadblocks," March 13, 1998, p. A12; "U.S. pledges Caspian Sea oil funds," June 1, 1998, p. A12.

6. "Europeans search for a shared identity amid dark memories," *Wall Street Journal*, October 19, 1998, pp. A1, A12.

7. "Euregions" (the term combines "European" and "regions") are located along the internal borders of the European Union and involve some form of cross-border cooperation between (semi)public organizations. A "Euregion" can be considered an organized border region (Corvers, Dankbaar, and Hassink, 1996, p. 175).

8. These accounts were taken from two *Wall Street Journal* reports, "Destination Mexico: U.S. scrap enlivens border trade," January 29, 1998, p. A13; "Mexico's 'tire mountain' worries U.S. neighbors," May 17, 1998, pp. B1, B4.

9. Reported in "U.S., Mexico push for solution to border pollution," *Chicago Tribune*, January 3, 2002, p. 9.

10. The accounts were from two *Wall Street Journal* articles, "Canada frets high-tech 'brain drain,'" May 12, 1998, p. A16; "U.S. traps Canadians in a one-size-fits-all border-control policy," June 4, 1998, p. A13.

11. The shared boundary between two states is counted only once. For example, the six participating states in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) have 10 boundaries, instead of 18 if the shared boundaries are counted twice. If a participating area in a transborder subregion joins two other national borders, it is counted twice. For example, Singapore borders Malaysia's Johor state to the north and Indonesia's Riau Islands offshore to the south, whereas Johor and Riau are not joined. Therefore, the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore growth triangle (IMS-GT) has only two shared borders (see chapter 7).

12. These examples are from a series of *Chicago Tribune* reports: "High security, long delays," September 12, 2001, p. 17; "Nation's open borders in spotlight," September 26, 2001, p. 9; "Visas add woes in wake of attacks," September 29, 2001, pp. 1, 6; "Mexican trucking debate hits another speed bump," November 5, 2002, p. 7; "Merchants in Texas feeling the pinch," November 2, 2001, p. 13; "Border crackdown vexes tribe," December 30, 2001, p. 14; "Bush seeks more border security funds," January 26, 2002, p. 8.

13. Under the initial procedures, foreign visitors traveling with visas would have two fingerprints scanned by an inkless device and a digital picture taken. The information, stored as part of the visitors' travel records, would be used to verify visitors' identities and to compare the information against a database of known and suspected terrorists and criminals. Future programs and procedures would include phasing in exit procedures at air and sea ports by December 31, 2004, and phasing in entry and exit procedures at the 50 busiest land ports of entry by December 31, 2004, and at all land ports by December 31, 2005. See "Foreign visitors checked," *Chicago Tribune*, January 6, 2004, p. 20.

14. See "The crisis infecting cross-border relations," accessed from the *South China Morning Post's* website (scmp.com) on May 7, 2003.